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REMARKS

Claims 1-14 are pending herein.

Claims 1-14 are rejected.

Claims 5, 6, 9, 10, 13 and 14 have been canceled.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 7 and 11 are currently amended.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C 103

Claims 1-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sakamoto et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,241,402), Inada et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,625,433), Tanaka et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,689,749) in view of either Matsuyama et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,514,570) or Chen et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,170,165).

It will be noted that claims 5, 6, 9, 10, 13 and 14 have been canceled.

In light of the amendments to independent claims 1 and 11, it is respectfully submitted that the cited references fail to render remaining claims 1-4, 7, 8, 11 and 12 obvious within the contemplation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) on the grounds that the cited references fail to teach or suggest all of the limitations of the claims, as will be hereinafter discussed in detail.

Sakamoto et al., Inada et al. and Tanaka et al. in view of Matsuyama et al. or Chen et al. fails to teach invention of claims 1-4, 7 and 8.

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In light of the amendments to claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that the cited references fail to render claims 1-4, 7 and 8 obvious within the contemplation of 35 U.S.C 103(a) since the cited references fail to teach or suggest all of the limitations of amended claim 1, and therefore, claims 2-4, 7 and 8 as dependent therefrom (MPEP 2143.03).

Specifically, it is respectfully submitted that the cited references fail to teach or suggest an apparatus comprising "a support...a dispensing head for dispensing the liquid onto [a] substrate...a knife ring...a plurality of independently-actuated automatic vertical adjustment mechanisms operably engaging...said knife ring...", as set forth in amended claim 1.

Inada et al. and Tanaka et al. each teaches an apparatus having a knife ring which is not vertically adjustably mounted.

Sakamoto et al. and Matsuyama et al. each discloses a single vertical adjustment mechanism (42 in Sakamoto et al. and 30 in Matsuyama et al.) which engages a knife ring (33 in Sakamoto et al. and 36 in Matsuyama et al.) to raise and lower the knife ring.

Chen et al. discloses the use of mechanical means such as screws to adjust the position of a knife edge ring (40) with respect to a wafer (col. 2, lines 25 and 26). However, Chen et al. fails to teach or suggest the use of any type of automatic vertical adjustment mechanism to accomplish that purpose.

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Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that Chen or Matsuyama et al. would fail to provide any teaching, suggestion or motivation to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify the device of Sakamoto, Inada or Tanaka in such a manner that a plurality of independently-actuated automatic vertical adjustment mechanisms operably engages a knife ring to place the knife ring at selected vertical positions beneath a substrate, as required by amended claim 1.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Sakamoto et al., Inada et al., and Tanaka et al. in view of either Matsuyama et al. or Chen et al. fails to teach or suggest all of the limitations of amended claim 1, and claims 2-4, 7 and 8 as dependent from amended claim 1, as required for a finding of obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a). Reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-4, 7 and 8 is therefore respectfully solicited.

Sakamoto et al., Inada et al. and Tanaka et al. in view of Matsuyama et al. or Chen et al. fails to teach invention of claims 11 and 12

It is respectfully submitted that the cited references fail to render amended claim 11, and claim 12 as dependent therefrom, obvious within the contemplation of 35 U.S.C 103(a) since the cited references fail to teach or suggest all of the limitations

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of amended claim 11, and therefore, claim 12 as dependent therefrom.

Specifically, it is respectfully submitted that the cited references fail to teach or suggest an apparatus comprising "a support...a dispensing head...a knife ring...a pair of independently-actuated hydraulic-powered ring actuating cylinders operably engaging...said knife ring in generally diametrically-opposed relationship to each other for placing said knife ring at selected vertical positions beneath [a] substrate", as set forth in amended claim 11 and defined by claim 12 as dependent therefrom.

It is respectfully submitted that the cited references would fail to provide any teaching, suggestion or motivation to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify the device of Sakamoto, Inada or Tanaka in such a manner that a pair of independently-actuated hydraulic-powered ring actuating cylinders operably engages a knife ring in generally diametrically-opposed relationship to each other to place the knife ring at selected vertical positions beneath a substrate, as required by amended claim 11.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that Sakamoto et al., Inada et al., and Tanaka et al. in view of either Matsuyama et al. or Chen et al. fails to teach or suggest all of the limitations of amended claim 11, and claim 12 as dependent from

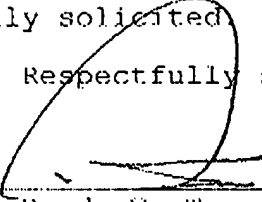
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amended claim 11, as required for a finding of obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a). Reconsideration and allowance of claims 11 and 12 is therefore respectfully solicited.

Conclusion

Every effort has been made to amend applicant's claims in order to define the invention in the scope to which it is entitled. Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-4, 7, 8, 11 and 12 is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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